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FATE *and* FORCE:
K O R,
Mr. *Mudge's* LIBERTY
Set in a true Light:

In Answer to his
S E R M O N
INTITLED,
LIBERTY.



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THE Doctrine of *Liberty* is a point of very great consequence in *Morality* and *Religion*, and should therefore be treated of with *care*, and in language *easy* to be understood. For it equally concerns *all* men to understand the nature and extent of their Liberty : and every thing relating to it, that is really important and worth knowing, must, for that very reason, be in itself *capable* of being express'd in *plain* English : as whatsoever cannot be express'd in plain *English*, and cannot be made intelligible to the common people is, by this very circumstance, demonstrated *not* to be a point of *importance* to Mankind, in affairs of *Morality* and *Religion*.

That I may be the better understood in treating of this Doctrine of *Liberty*, I shall divide it into *three* kinds, *viz.* *Natural*, *Civil*, and *Religious*, and speak of each of them separately.

By *Natural Liberty* is meant the Power or Ability which we find in us of *acting* and moving, or of *forbearing* to act, *as we please*. That we have such a Power, in *many* instances, no man, I should think, can doubt. We perceive by continual *experience*, that we can move a hand, or lay it at rest; that we can rise from our seats, and begin to walk, or else continue to sit longer, as we shall choose; that we can begin to speak, or else keep longer silence; that we can turn our thoughts from one subject to another, &c. In some cases indeed we have not this Liberty, *viz.* when we have *only* an ability to *move*, but *none* to *forbear*; or when we have *only* an ability to *forbear*, (if I may so speak) and *none* to *move*. A man confined to his bed by *broken* Limbs, has an ability to *remain* in bed, but he has no ability to *go out* of the bed: and therefore we do not say, he continues in bed *freely*, however *contented* he is to remain there. He is under *necessity*, and cannot come out of the bed, if he would. A man does not act *freely*, except, when it was in his power to have *forborn* that action.

In making a *judgement* concerning *plain* Propositions, a man has *not* a Liberty of determining for either side of the question as he pleases. It is in our power to believe, that the whole of any thing is greater than any one part of that same thing: but it is not in our power to believe the contrary, *viz.* that the whole is *not* greater. We are under a real and absolute *necessity* of believing that a thousand are more than one, and all other such evident Truths. And in all cases we *cannot*
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help believing according to the evidence that *appears* to our understandings. Thus far then we have *no Liberty*. But still we have liberty to *examin* the arguments that are offer'd in proof of any doctrine, or to *refuse* such examination. We can, if we will, seriously and impartially consider what is said on both sides: while we have a *natural* power, tho' not a *right*, of *refusing* to hear what *one* side says. Here then, by the way, lies the *fault* of them among us, who do not believe the truth of the *Christian* Religion. Their *fault* is, that they suffer some *unreasonable Prejudice* or *Passion* to bear sway, and do not impartially examin the Arguments on *both* sides. Tho' they cannot help believing, according to the evidence which appears to them: yet 'tis their *fault* to *refuse* to consider *impartially* the evidence of Christianity, which they may hear, and consider if they *will*. Whosoever believes Christianity to be a *divine* Religion, and of the greatest *importance* to Mankind, cannot but conclude from the Perfections of God, that every *impartial* Examiner shall certainly and unavoidably perceive the evidence of it.

With respect to the Motions which we find in our *Bodies*, we perceive a difference: in some we have a Liberty of moving, or of forbearing to move as we please: while other Motions are *involuntary* and *necessary*, as all are, where the continuance or ceasing of the Motion does not depend upon our *Will*. Our *Blood* moves, and our *Pulse* beat, not according to our *Will*, but by a *necessity* of Nature. Between these *necessary* Motions of the Blood and Pulse, and the *voluntary* Motions of the Tongue or Hand, there is a vast difference. The motion of a sound Hand fully depends upon the Will, and is govern'd by it: so as that, if I only say within myself, *my Hand shall move*, it instantly moves: or
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if I inwardly resolve, *my Hand shall cease to move*, it is immediately at rest. But it is quite otherwise with the Motion of the *Blood*. It is not my *Will* that puts it in motion: but it moves whether I will or not. And if I should inwardly resolve, *my Blood shall cease to move*, it would not cease to move one moment the sooner for that. But a mere resolution of the Mind, a mere saying within, *I will*, produces *voluntary* Motions, or puts a stop to them. In these *voluntary* motions, which are truly *our own* Actions, we are under no *force*, *compulsion*, or *necessity* whatsoever.

The Reverend Mr. *Mudge* has been so far from asserting and establishing the Doctrine of Man's *Natural Liberty*, that he has expressly declared against it, and represented it as a *Contradiction*, p. 3. His words are, 'No considering Man, I suppose, will claim such a Liberty whereby he shall be able to *deny his consent to the* clearest evidence of Reason, the most unexceptionable testimony of Sense or Faith, and the *strongest Motives of Action*; insomuch that where a thing is proved true, he shall be free still to think it false, in opposition to his own Lights; to disbelieve a thing, which to himself carries every appearance of Credit; to *do* this when every *Motive of Action determines* him to do the contrary. One can hardly express this so gently, but the *Contradiction* shews itself through it; for it would be really to judge against his own Judgement, to believe against his own Belief, and *to do that which he cannot do.*' By putting these things thus together, Mr. *Mudge* declares, that we have no other Liberty in point of *Action*, than we have in point of *Judgement*. He asserts, and every one will grant him, that we have *not* a Liberty of *believing* against evidence, and every appearance of credit.

credit. But it will not be easily granted him, that there is the *same necessity* of *acting* according to the *Motives* of Actions. According to him, when my Understanding is convinced by the *strongest* Arguments and *Motives*, that any thing is my *Duty*, I can no more avoid doing it, than I can by a mere resolution stop the motion of my Pulse; and that when my Mind sees the *strongest Motives* to refrain from acting, I can no more do that thing, than I can pull down the Moon. This Doctrine artfully call'd *Liberty*, makes Man a mere piece of Clock-work, who, when he *acts wrong*, *still acts always conformably to his own Motives, and is obliged to act consistently with them*, p. 3. as a Clock always moves conformably to the weights that put it in motion, and cannot act inconsistently with them. According to this Doctrine call'd *Liberty*, the Clock moves *freely*, whenever my fingers, or any such power foreign to the Clock, do not turn the hand, but it is determin'd to move by its *own* weights. Whereas this is in truth a *necessary* Motion, made necessary by the weights themselves. If the *Motives* of Action did in the same *necessary* manner determine us to act, we should have no *Liberty* of Action, but be under as real, and as much, *necessity* as the Clock. Whether the Motives are strong or weak, Mr. Mudge supposes we are always under a *necessity* of acting according to the Motives that appear to us to have the *greater* weight. The Motives, that determin'd me to write these Remarks on his Sermon, are *weak* in comparison of the Motives which determine me to *obey the Gospel*. And yet, according to him, since the Motives to *determine me to write* are somewhat *stronger* than the Reasons *against* writing, I have *no Liberty* to *deny my consent to these strongest Motives* of writing, but am oblig'd to *act consistently with them*. For
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which reason, by the way, he cannot but *forgive* my writing against him.

If it was to be supposed that the *strongest Motives* of action did lay us under as great a *necessity* of acting, as the clearest *Evidence* of Truth does of *believing*: yet still it might be question'd whether *Motives* in themselves of *less* weight, (tho' stronger than the Motives on the opposite side) would lay us under such a *necessity* of acting. If the Motives that now appear to my Mind against cutting off my right hand, be supposed to be *as irresistible* as the evidence of the Sun's being *bigger* than the Moon; yet the Motives that inclined me to write this Pamphlet, cannot be thought to be *thus irresistible*. The supposing that the Motives against cutting off my hand, and the Motives to write this Pamphlet to be *equally* irresistible, is really supposing that they are of *equal*, tho' granted to be of *unequal strength*; and that it was as impossible for me to avoid writing, as it is to prevail on myself to cut off this right hand with which I write. But this is what few, I suppose, will find any inclination to believe. The only way to evade this is by saying, that the *weaker* set of Motives now mention'd have *too much* strength in them to be *resisted*: and yet the other set of Motives may have *greater* strength, having more than the *smallest* degree of *irresistible* force. If this be our Author's meaning, then he makes the *weakest* Motives for acting to be *irresistible*, when there are *no* Motives *against* acting; and so in the end makes all our Actions *equally necessary* and *fatal*. Whereas it is most evident to experience, that we *can* act against *weak* Motives, on the side of such as are *perceived* to be *weaker*. The Motives I have to desist from writing are weaker than the Motives to continue: and yet I as plainly find in myself a
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power to desist *this moment*, as I do a power to continue. When I hold up my hand, and move my fingers, I plainly see, that I can easily act against the little motives that incline me to move them any one particular way. Every one finds by experience, that he can act inconsistently with *small* motives. And it is as plain, that all the *strongest* motives to action in the world do *not necessitate* a man to act. Surely 'tis *possible*, though 'tis very wicked, for a man to act *against his conscience*. It is *possible* for a man to cut off a finger, while he has *no one* motive in the world to do it, and has very *strong* motives *against* it. Indeed motives of action have *some weight* and influence, not leaving us *indifferent* in point of *inclination*. It is not as easy to act *against* strong motives, as it is to act *according* to them. But however *difficult* it may be, it is not *impossible*: however *strong* the motives and inclination are, they are not *irresistible*. This matter can be determin'd no otherwise, than by men's own *experience*. If any man finds the motives of action in all cases to be *in him* irresistible, he cannot help thinking that he has *no liberty* of action; and, since he will measure all men by himself, that *no one* else has any. But he must give others leave to say, that they find by constant experience, their motives of action are in *no case* irresistible. It will be pleaded, I suppose, that when I fancy I act contrary to the *stronger* motives, I deceive myself by not considering, that the motive that determines me in such a case is *really the stronger*, even tho' it be no other than a view to *shew my liberty*. But I beg leave to say, that a man must have a very unaccountable turn of head, before he can be persuaded to believe, that a view to *shew his liberty* is a motive to cut off his right hand, *stronger* than all the motives from interest and religion, from earth and heaven,

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against it. I conclude then, that motives of action do not *constrain* us. If they did, we should then not only be *enslaved* to our *own motives*, but also to every person, who *suggests* to us motives of acting, *stronger* than any we see against acting. The motives to action Mr. Mudge owns, p. 3. are supplied from *Sense* as well as *Faith*, from the *passions*, of *Love*, *hatred*, *hope*, and *fear*. According to this, a man that meets me in the high-way can, in the most literal sense, as much *force* me to climb over the hedge by mere *threatnings*, as he could by *dragging* me with his *hands*. When I have the strong motives of violent *fears* to persuade me to go over the hedge, and no motive against it but the *little* trouble that it would cost me, those motives of fear would, according to Mr. Mudge, be *irresistible*: consequently, as the *man* I met with *suggested* those motives, *he* really took away my liberty, and laid me under the *necessity* of acting. In this case I should act according to *my own* motives, and yet not be free. Accordingly Mr. Mudge declares, p. 11. *A man is not free therefore because—he acts according to his own motives.* It may be ask'd then, what it is that makes a man free? If he is under a necessity of acting according to *his own* motives; and their being *his own* will not denominate him free, surely he cannot be said to be free in any proper sense, with regard to *Natural Liberty*. There is indeed another sense of the word, *freedom*, in which Mr. Mudge truly says, p. 11. *Then is a man free to perfection, when nothing hinders him from judging and acting according to truth.* When a man is deliver'd from his aversion to goodness, and from his inclinations to vice, he has then a *Liberty to do well*, without check and controul. This is truly *Liberty*; but at the same time, the man has an ability of doing *ill*, as well as of doing *good*. A being deliver'd from

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from slavery to a *Master*, or to our own foolish *Passions*, is not all the Liberty we have. We have also a *natural* Liberty, which is the same, whether we are *Slaves* or *Freemen*, whether our *Passions* are *strong* or *weak*, even an ability to act *according* to our inclinations, and an ability of acting *contrary* to them. Whereas, according to the Doctrine of the Sermon now under consideration, I can *force* and *necessitate* every man to act as I will have him to do, to whom I can suggest motives of hope, fear, reason, &c. *stronger* than any that occur to him on the other side. It is the same in a *Clock*, whose motion depends not *originally* on any thing *within* itself, but on the Power of *Attraction*, or *Gravitation*, which draws or thrusts the weights downward to the earth. Thus, according to the Doctrine of Mr. *Mudge*, a man is not originally determin'd to act by any thing *within* himself, but by those *motives* of action which are *suggested* to his reason, hopes, fears, &c. by *other* persons; and so is as truly a mere *Machine* as a *Clock*, and absolutely under the government of *Fate*.

This Doctrine has a *tendency* (tho' I really believe it is far enough from Mr. *Mudge's* design,) to destroy all the *distinction* between Vice and Virtue. Whereas from the Doctrine of *Liberty*, as I have stated it, we plainly discern, that a man is *accountable* for his *actions*, while he is not accountable for any *involuntary* motions in the body. We do not *blame* a man as guilty of a *fault*, when his *Pulse* *intermit*, because he cannot help it, and his resolving that it shall not intermit, will not make it the more regular. But if a man moves his *tongue*, or *hand* amiss, we justly *blame* him, because this was really his *own* Action, and he might have refrain'd his tongue, or his hand from doing amiss, if he

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would.

would. If hope, and fear, and other motives of action, lay a man under as much a *necessity* of *acting*, as demonstration perceived by himself lays him under a necessity of *believing*; it is a clear case, that a man is no more to be blamed or commended, to be rewarded or punish'd, for acting according to his hopes and fears, than for conforming his Judgement to a Demonstration. The impious Murderers of King *Charles* the First, whose names deservedly stink, cannot be condemn'd upon this Doctrine of *Fate*, and *Necessity*. Their *hopes*, or *fears*, or some other Passions, determin'd them to murder him. According to the Doctrine of the Sermon now under consideration, they had *not a Liberty* to spare his Life, *when every motive of action* that occur'd to their minds, *determin'd them* to commit the Murder, and they *were obliged to act consistently with their own motives*, p. 3. To this Mr. *Mudge* will answer, p. 4. *Here lay their Misfortune* [not their crime] *that they either did not know, or did not attend to other greater reasons and prevailing motives, which would have led them another way.* This, I own, is very true. For whatever right *one part* of the Legislature, *i. e.* the *Parliament*, may be supposed to have, as an *equal*, to contend with the *other part* of the Legislature, the *person of the King*: surely those miscreants, who first set aside the Parliament, and afterward murder'd the King, had no manner of right to call him to an account, much less to put him to death. And they justly deserved all the Punishments they afterward suffer'd upon the account of this their horrid Sin. The reason is, because they *voluntarily* suffer'd themselves to be misled by their *Passions*, when they might, if they would, have easily seen, that it was *Murder*. But according to the Doctrine of *Necessity* and *Fate*,
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where was their *fault*? It was indeed their *misfortune*, that they did not attend to *more prevailing motives*. But how *could* they attend to them, when they were not *suggested* to their minds? If they had no *natural Liberty*, they could no more *seek after* stronger motives, than a *Clock* can *seek after* greater weights. If *Fate* did not happen to suggest stronger motives to them, they cannot, on this principle, be at all blamed for not observing them. This Doctrine of *Fate* makes *all* human actions equally *necessary*, and consequently neither good nor evil: for the sake of which consequence, if our author did see the consequence, I am sure, he would renounce the principle, from which it flows.

That which has misled men into the belief of the Doctrine of *Fate*, is their not considering, that the power of *action*, or of beginning motion is intirely *different* from, and independent on the *Understanding*. That the power of acting, and the Understanding are *different* things is plain, because they *may*, and sometimes actually *do* exist separately. Infants of a day old have a power of moving their little Limbs: and yet no one will suspect that they have any Understanding to guide their actions, or any powerful *motives* in their Understandings to determine them to move this way, rather than the other. And, on the other hand, it is easy to conceive, that the Almighty Creator of the world should make a being that has an Understanding without any power of acting or moving at all. The same may be said of the *Sense*, and of the *Passions*. God can make a creature with *Sense* and *Passions*, that yet shall not have as much power of motion as an Oyster. The power of acting then is *independent* on all these: consequently none of them can put a *force* upon a man's Actions; but notwithstanding all the motives
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of Action that can be represented to his mind, he has still a *natural* power, tho' *not a right*, to leave that action undone. Let the inclination, passion, reason, or motive, be as strong as it will, we find we *can* act *contrary* to it. If a man be ever so violently inclined to *cheat* me in a bargain, he *can* notwithstanding *refrain* from cheating me, if he will. If it were *not* in his power to refrain, and to check that inclination, he could not justly be *punished* as a cheat. It would be undoubtedly *unjust*, and barbarous to punish a man for not flying up to the Sun, because it is not in his power to do so. There would be the same unrighteousness in punishing a *Cheat*, or a *Murderer*, provided the motives to cheating and murder were absolutely *irresistible*, and the man had not a power of seeking after other motives of action. If a man was under as much *necessity* of doing well, when the motives that happen to occur to his thoughts lead him to it, as he is of judging that two and two make four, when the evidence of this truth is present to his mind, it would be as weak to *reward* him for that well *doing*, as for this right *judgement*. And if he, that is guilty of Murder, could no more help committing it (when the motives to it, that happened to occur to his mind, were stronger than any motives against it that he happened then to think of) than he could avoid judging that honey is sweeter than wormwood; it would be as unjust to punish him for that murder, as it would be to punish a man for not believing that wormwood is sweeter than honey. This is the unhappy *tendency*, tho' I dare say, not the *design*, of the first principle in Mr. *Mudge's* Sermon, which expressly puts *all our actions* upon a level with our *Judgements* in point of *Liberty*, and makes them all *equally necessary*.

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Tho' we have a *natural* Liberty in *most* cases, and have a power of doing either good or evil, as we please: yet it is certain, we have *not* a *right* to do *evil* in any case, but are *obliged* always to do that which is *good*. Our natural Liberty is happily bounded both by human, and divine Laws. This leads me to speak of the *civil* Liberty with which God has indow'd us.

Civil Liberty signifies the Liberty we have to act consider'd as the *Subjects* of the Kingdom to which we belong. And here it is obvious at the first sight, that the just *restraint* upon our Natural Liberty is exactly as *extensive* as is the rightful *Authority* of the Legislature, and *no more*. The supreme government of the nation, *i. e.* the concurring will of King and Parliament, has an undoubted right to do, and to require every thing that is for the *real good* of the kingdom: while they have *no* manner of authority to *violate* any one Law of *Nature*, or to require or do any one thing that would be in the least *injurious* to the community. When they *require* us to do what is really for the *good* of the Society, and *forbid* us to do what would tend to its *hurt*, they lay a restraint, tho' a very just one, on our *natural* Liberty of Action, and we are bound in *Conscience* to obey them. If a man has a *natural* power, I mean, *Strength*, or *Craft* enough, to cheat me of what is mine: yet he is obliged to *check* this his power of cheating me. His being *able* to do evil, if he will, is no reason why he should have a toleration to do it. It is fit, and necessary, that men should be deter'd from doing evil by proper *threatnings*, which will have *some* influence, tho' it be not *irresistible*. The civil Liberty which we have under our Laws is *not* a Liberty to do *evil*, but a Liberty to do *good*, a Liberty to enjoy our own *properties*, a Liberty to engage without disturbance in an *honest trade*, &c.

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Where this Liberty is infringed, there is a fault in the Law. For every man has a *natural*, and unalienable *right* to a full Liberty to do all the *good* that he is capable of doing.

Laws do not, and cannot destroy our *natural* Liberty. Still notwithstanding all the excellent Laws, and just, and severe threatnings of the Legislature, men have, and cannot but have a *natural* Liberty to break these Laws, and to incur these penalties, if they will be so *mad*, and *foolish*. These Laws and Threatnings direct us to exercise our Powers of Action *aright*, and suggest to us *strong motives* to do so, and so make it very uneasy to us to do otherwise. This restraint which is laid upon our *Natural* Liberty by just authority and good Laws is so far from being an unhappiness, that it is really a *blessing* to us. Suppose there were no good Laws to restrain men from wickedness, but every man was allowed with impunity to do all the mischief he could, Mankind would be the most miserable of all animals: we should hear of nothing but adulteries, rapes, duels, murders, &c. till at length all mankind would be devour'd. It is a happiness that mankind is restrain'd from such destructive methods by wholesom Laws. All the Liberty a reasonable man will desire from *human Laws* is a Liberty of being as *useful* as he is capable of being among men; a Liberty of worshiping God according to his *Conscience*, and of working out his own Salvation. Grant us this Liberty, and we will be glad to be restrain'd from every thing that is *evil*.

The Nature and Extent of *Religious*, or *Christian* Liberty comes next to be consider'd. And here the truth lies very obvious, and easy. With regard to *God* we have *no right* to judge and act as we please: but with regard to *men* we have in *some* cases, tho' *not* in *others*.

1. It must be always remember'd with great care, that with regard to *God* we have *no Licence* or *Liberty* to *judge* and *act* as we please. His Authority over Us is *absolute*. And we cannot have a stronger reason for the truth of any thing than this, that *God* hath said it. So that if he sends a messenger from heaven to teach us Religion, we are bound to receive, believe, and obey that Divine Religion. It is *not* an *indifferent* thing with regard to *God* and *another world*, whether we receive the *Christian* Religion or not. If we reject it, we resist the Authority of *God*, and expose ourselves to his Condemnation, as it is written, *Mark* xvi. 16. *He that believes*, [the Gospel, v. 15.] *and is baptized shall be saved* : but *he that believes not* [the Gospel, when preach'd to him, v. 15.] *shall be damn'd*. As to *particular* Doctrines also of the *Christian* Religion, it is *not* an *indifferent* thing with respect to *God*, whether we believe them or not. It is our unquestionable *Duty* to *seek* after, and imbrace the *truth* in the *Christian* Revelation. If we fall into a mistake, we are accountable to *God* for it, and must expect to be *punish'd* by him answerably to the *malignity* of the *Causes* and *Consequences* of this Error. If *carelessness* was the Cause of the Mistake, the carelessness will be far enough from being an excuse. If Love to the *world*, desire of *Preferment*, or Love to *Sin* be the cause of a man's rejecting any real Doctrine of the Gospel, such a *wicked* cause of his Error will render his Guilt very great. And if the Error be of such a Nature, as that it leads him to be guilty of such actions, as are really enormous *Vices*, his Sin will be still the more aggravated and damning.

For instance: If a man thro' *pride*, and peevishness of temper has brought himself to believe, that he may lawfully *persecute* such as are really *inoffensive* in their behavior, this his persuasion will not excuse him before *God*, who will severely condemn him for suffering his *Pride* and *Passion* to mislead him into such a very wicked, inhuman, and *Diabolical* Practice.

Tho' it is true, that we are accountable to *God* for all our opinions and practices in Religion: yet it is certain on the other hand, that our *merciful* Father, who knows our frame, pities our weakness, and will not punish us for every *little* mistake we may happen to fall into. If he would, no man could be saved. If we honestly, and impartially seek after his truth in the Gospel, and sincerely obey it, he will take care to lead us into all *necessary* truth, as it is written, *John vii. 17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.* When we are thus secured from denying any *necessary* Truth, and are really *impartial* in our Search after other truths (which, by the way, he is not, who will not hear what is said on *both* sides) we may assure ourselves, that we shall not be condemned for any *less* errors.

2. With regard to *Men* we can have *no* right to practise any thing as Religion, which is really *inconsistent* with the *good* and welfare of *Mankind*. This is plain: because *as sure* as we are, that any Practice is inconsistent with the good and welfare of *Mankind*, *so sure* we are, that it is not, and that it *never can* be a part of any *true*, and *divine* Religion. It is impossible that any true Religion should be *contrary* to the religion of
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of *Nature*. But Natural Religion *forbids* every practice that is *inconsistent* with the *Good* and *Welfare* of Mankind, and requires Mankind to *oppose*, hinder and suppress that Practice. Suppose any men among us should be so wicked as to esteem it a part of Religion to offer up *human* sacrifices to God, they would still have *no right* to set up this inhuman Practice, since its being *inconsistent* with the *publick Good* is an absolute Demonstration that it *is not*, and *cannot* be an ordinance of God. The Law of Nature gives every Government a *Right* to suppress such a *pernicious* Practice: consequently, since there cannot be two *opposite rights*, no man can have a right to *set it up*.

3. When the Religion, which we profess, has nothing in it inconsistent with the welfare and happiness of Mankind, or with Natural Religion, we have a *right* with regard to *Men* to judge and act in the affairs of this *innocent* religion as we see fit. That *men* have nothing to do with our *Judgements* in matters of Religion is very evident: because they cannot certainly know what our Judgements are; in as much as they *cannot* search our *Hearts*, or discern our *Spirits*. If we would be so wicked, as to tell them, we are of their Opinion, when we are not, they could not contradict us, and must acquiesce. It is obvious, that no man can have a right to govern our *Thoughts*, because no man can *know* them. And as to our *actions*, which we perform out of regard to an *innocent*, and *inoffensive* religion, which we profess; men can have no just authority to restrain our Liberty, for that very reason; because the actions are *innocent*, and *inoffensive*.

From what has been said, it will appear, that Mr. *Mudge* has made a very unfair representation of this doctrine, p. 34. in the following words. ‘ The right of Judging for ourselves, ‘ either justifies nothing, or justifies every thing ‘ alike ; the wildest excesses of thought, or action, except it be supposed that there is a right ‘ of thinking, and not of acting according to ‘ our thoughts.’ By the right of *Judging for ourselves* in this place, Mr. *Mudge* means a right of Judging as we *please* independently of *truth*, the Light of *Nature*, and the revelations of *God*, i. e. a right to judge, that virtue is vice, that white is black, that Persecution is lawful, and any other absurdity in the world: in which sense he very justly *condemns* it. But he needs not be told, that no man of common Sense, ever understood, or attempted to defend the right of judging for ourselves in this sense. It is pleaded for in no other sense than that, in which I have now explain’d it, as signifying, that tho’ we have *no* right to judge *falsely*, tho’ *God* has a right to *dictate* to our *Judgements*, to *examine* into our *Opinions*, and tho’ *Men* have a right to hinder us from doing what is *prejudicial* to Mankind ; yet when we profess and practise an *innocent* and *inoffensive* Religion, men can have *no* right to *hinder* or disturb us, but *we* have a right to judge and practise in the affairs of that *innocent* Religion as we see fit. The right of judging for ourselves, thus explain’d, as it has been understood by them who have defended it, is far enough, I am sure, from *justifying the wildest excesses of thought and action*.

Our Author proceeds: ' But it seems, it
 ' is in Religion only that we have this right,
 ' for in points of Morality we ought to think
 ' truly; we can claim no privilege of think-
 ' ing murder, adultery, or perjury, innocent
 ' things: any one that should advance these
 ' Doctrines would justly fall under the pub-
 ' lick censure. But why this Difference? The
 ' Reason is plain, because Murder or Perjury
 ' are things that concern our civil interests:
 ' but God and his worship may either be,
 ' or not be, without any consequence to the
 ' world.' If Mr. *Mudge* in this passage had
 been representing the Opinion of a Set of
Atheistical Rakes, he would have done them
 no wrong: but as he intended to make the
 application (he must pardon me for saying it)
 the reflection is *barbarous*. Our Doctrine is
 here grossly *misrepresented*, else it could not
 have been ridiculed. He opposes a *right to*
judge for ourselves to an *Obligation to think*
truly, as if it was our opinion, that in matters
 of Religion we have no Obligation to think
truly. Whereas it is our constant and in-
 variable Doctrine, that we are not only in points
 of Morality, but even in *all things*, out of
 Conscience toward *God*, obliged to think *truly*,
 and are *accountable to him*, whenever we do
not: tho' in many cases *men* have no right to
 examine us, whether we think truly or not.
 Besides, the Reason which he assigns as our's,
 why we claim a right with regard to *men* to
 judge, and act as we see fit in matters of an
inoffensive and *innocent* religion, while we claim
 no right, even with regard to *men*, to act in-
 consistently with the *general Good* of Mankind,

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is not the reason which we have ever given. God knows our hearts: we abhor the thoughts of saying as he represents us, that *God, and his worship may either be, or not be, without any consequence to the World.* True religion, and the *real* worship of God, which *he himself has appointed*, are of the greatest service to the world. Consequently every Government, and every private Man too, is obliged to do all that is possible to *convince* men of the truth of the Divine Religion, and to *persuade* them to the *true* worship of God. But farther than this *convincing* the Judgment, and *persuading* them, no Man, and no Government, can go. What does it signify to *force* a Man to give his Attendance at Church, and to pronounce the words of a Prayer; if you have not *convinced* his Understanding of the duty, and he does *not* really *pray*? Religion is not hereby advanced, but only a *hypocrite* made. What advantage is gain'd to Christianity by forcing an *Infidel*, or a *Rake* to receive the Lord's Supper? You may force him to perform the *outward* actions, to *kneel*, to *eat* of the bread, and to *drink* of the cup, to *pronounce* any set of words: but you cannot force him to *pray*, and give *thanks* in his *heart*, to reverence *Christ*, to renew his *Covenant* with God, or in short to do any thing more than you may teach an *Idiot*, or some sort of *Brutes* to do: still he is not a Christian, but an *Infidel*, or a *Rake*. The true reason of the difference now mention'd is this: It is *possible* for a Government to restrain men from Murder, Adultery, Perjury, and such other *outward actions* as are *prejudicial* to Mankind, by proper Laws and Penalties.

Penalties. But it is *impossible* in the *nature* of things, for any Government to *make men worship God*, or to *know* whether they *really* worship him or not. Mr. Mudge will readily agree with us, that the *Worship* of God does not lie merely in men's repeating the words of a Prayer. If this were worship, an *Atheist*, or a *Parrot*, who should be taught to repeat the Prayer, might be truly said to worship God also: which every one sees is sufficiently absurd. Let a man repeat the words of a Prayer, which he thoroughly understands, with ever so grave a Voice, and reverent Gestures: yet he does *not pray*, unless he *really desires* in his heart the blessings, which are naturally signified by the words he speaks: nor does he worship God by *thanksgiving*, unless he is *really* in his *heart* thankful for the Mercies, at the very time that he pronounces the words of the thanksgiving. But it is a plain case, that no Government in the world can pretend to *know* whether a Man worships God, or not, because it cannot know his heart: consequently it is *not possible* in the nature of things for the Government to *force* him to worship God. But on the other hand, it is *possible* for the Government to force men to abstain from Adultery, Murder, Perjury, and all other *practices* that are *inconsistent* with the *Good* and *Welfare* of Mankind. The Government has a *right* to do this, because it is *possible* to be done, and the Law of Nature has required it at it's hands. But the Government *cannot* have a right to do *impossibilities*: and therefore it can have no right to punish any man for not worshipping God. The best thing the Govern-

Government can do, (and it were to be wish'd every Government would do it) in order to promote the true worship of God, is to promote none to places of trust and profit, but such as it has reason in the Judgement of Charity to believe to be sincere in the Divine Worship. But as to points of Religion, where men's practice is *not inconsistent* with the *Safety* of the Publick, the Government can have *no right* to interpose with *Authority*, because nothing without *my own judgement* can make it matter of *Religion* to me. It is *impossible* I should judge any thing to be *Religion*, unless it appears to my *own* judgment, to be instituted and commanded by *God*. But the Government's requiring me to believe so, is not a reason for me to believe it. But more of this under the next Observation.

Mr. *Mudge* says, p. 34. ' The Dissenters
' need not seek shelter under Principles, which
' bring them upon a level with the most a-
' bandon'd of men.' If by this he means, as the words would *naturally* signify, that we need not do this, because we have far *better* principles, under which we may shelter ourselves; we thank him for the Compliment. But I fear this was not the meaning, because he immediately adds, ' For such is the right
' of Judging for ourselves.' That this Principle does *not* set us upon a *Level* with the *most abandon'd* of men, has been fully shewn: and if Mr. *Mudge* had not *strangely misinterpreted* it, he would never have thought it did. The principle we shelter ourselves under is this, that we are bound, out of Conscience toward God, in *all* things to judge and act *rightly*, and
that

that the Government has a *right* to hinder us from *doing* or *teaching* what would *injure* the Community; but they have *no right*, because they have *no ability*, to *force* a man to be religious, or to receive any thing as a Part of religion, before his own *private* Judgement is convinced, that it is really a part of it. It is as *impossible* in the *Nature of things* for us to leave others to judge, as it is to leave others to eat, or to breathe for us. It is a standing and undoubted Maxim of both Natural, and Reveled Religion, that they who *teach for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*, do *worship* God in *vain*, Mark vii. 7. When a Priest takes oil, and cream, and spittle, &c. and therewith solemnly anoints a Child, at the time of Baptism, and devoutly begs of God to *bless the Ointment*, he is all that while solemnly trifling; and this, which he calls the worship of God, is altogether in *vain*. He in this particular worships God no more, than he does when he is found asleep, or picking straws. All the *time* that is taken up in performing all such *uncommanded* Services in the Worship of God, is time really *lost*, and *misspent*. All that while the Worship of God really *stands still*, and does not proceed till the Priest comes to do something, which *God himself* has really *appointed* in his worship. Unless a practice in Worship be of *divine* institution, it is *impossible* in the Nature of things we should know that it will be *accepted*. And the Scripture has expressly assured us, that it will not. Before then *we dare* do any thing in the worship of God, *we* must be satisfied in our *own* minds, that it is *not* a command-

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ment of *Men*, but is really a Doctrine and Command of *God*. But how shall we be satisfied, that it is a Command of God? Shall we, in this case, take the word of the men themselves, *whose own Command it is*, and who teach it for a Doctrine of God? If we should, I am sure, they themselves would secretly laugh at our folly. Is it reasonable, that we should consent to their being judges in their own cause, especially if by that Craft they have their Wealth? If we must not take them as judges in their *own Cause*, then we have a right to demand the *proof* of its being a *divine* institution. It is *not possible* in the nature of things, we should be satisfied that what men (especially when it is their interest to say it) teach is the Doctrine of *God*, unless they *shew us* the same Doctrine in the word of God, and so make *us judges* for ourselves.

M. Mudge indeed pleads, that a great *Submission* ought to be paid to the *General Judgement*, p. 8, 9. We readily allow, that the *general Judgement* should have so much *weight* with us, as to make us very carefully and impartially *examine* every opinion which we happen to receive contrary to the general Judgement of Mankind: taking particular care also, (since the General Judgement may happen to be *wrong*, as it is in a *Papish Country*) that we do not suffer ourselves to be unduely byass'd by any *partial regard* to the General Judgement, because it is *General*, any more than by a partial prejudice *against* it on that account. After we have thus carefully and *impartially* examin'd our opinion, and weigh'd what is urged against it, and it still appears
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to us to be truth, We *cannot*, as Mr. Mudge owns, *p. 3. think it false in opposition to our own Lights*, i.e. to our own *private* Judgement. And if 10,000 men should tell us, a thing is false, which appears to us to be true, it is own'd to be *impossible* in the Nature of things for us *to disbelieve*, while *to ourselves* (*i. e. in our private judgement*) *it carries every appearance of Credit*. Thus this deference to the publick Judgement is overturn'd by the very hand that was attempting to build it up.

But this is not all: If the publick judgement of the Society has an *authority* over a private Person in Matters of *Religion*, the consequence will be, that as we must be *Churchmen* in *England*, we must be *Papists* in *France*, *Mahometans* in *Turkey*, and *Heathens* in *Japan*. That this is a necessary consequence from Mr. Mudge's Doctrine about submitting our Faith to the Publick Judgement, will be evident from applying his own Words to this Case, *p. 8.* ' If great regard is to be had
' to my Understanding, a great regard is
' due to the Understanding of another' [particularly of every Papist, Mahometan, and Heathen in the world]; ' if another's have
' but a little weight, mine can have no more.
' ——— Be the understanding of Man ever
' so much magnified, we ought to magnify it alike' [in all Nations]; ' and not, as is
' often seen, say very great, and magnificent
' things of Reason, and in the conclusion
' take the whole benefit of it to ourselves,
' many times in defiance to the Reason of the
' whole World.— We ought therefore to give
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‘ the same advantage to others, which we
 ‘ claim to ourselves, and a much greater still
 ‘ to the united Sense of [Popish] Societies,
 ‘ and [Heathen] Kingdoms of Men.’ If this
 reasoning be good, it will *alike* oblige a pri-
 vate man in *France* to be a Papist, and in
Japan to be a Heathen, as a private man in
England to be of the *establi^hd* Religion. Let
 Mr. Mudge say, how the private Man in *Ja-*
pan shall answer this Argument, when urged
 upon him in favour of *heathen Idolatry*, and
 I will immediately tell him how to answer
 the same argument in *any other* Country. In-
 deed I have answer’d it already, by shewing
 how far private men have, and cannot but
 have, a right to judge for themselves. Be-
 sides, if a Private Man in *Japan* must submit
 to the General Understanding of the People
 in *that Country*, there is the same reason that
 one particular Nation should (as Mr. Mudge
 allows) submit to the *United Sense of Societies*
and Kingdoms: upon which supposition, we
 must all turn *heathen Idolaters*, since the hea-
 thens are the *Majority*, being almost *two thirds*,
 of Mankind, and almost *four* times as many
 as the *Christians*, as *Brerewood* computes, in his
Enquiries, p. 118.

In order to avoid this consequence, Mr. M.
 will plead perhaps, that he has set a *guard* and
limitation to his expressions in other places of his
 Sermon; as particularly when he says, p. 9.
 ‘ The Subject naturally comes into the sense of
 ‘ his Superiors, to a *certain degree*, as far as it
 ‘ is *reasonable* he should.’ And p. 11. ‘ Faith
 ‘ in Man, or which is the same, submission to
 ‘ authority to a *certain degree*, far from enslaving
 ‘ the

‘ the mind, helps to set it free.’ What is this *certain degree* of Submission? *How far* is it *reasonable*? How will he shew that the Submission he requires in *England*, is not to be required in the *same* degree in *France* or *Japan*? And if it be required in the *same* degree, must not a private Man be in the *same* degree obliged to be a *Papist* in *France*, as a Churchman in *England*? *Who* must judge, how far it is *reasonable* to submit to Authority? If a private Man in *France* must judge for himself: I must by Mr. *Mudge*’s own principles, claim an *equal* right to judge for *myself* here in *England*. But if I must *not* judge for myself how far it is reasonable for me to submit to Authority, in Matters of Religion, the Private Man in *France* must *not* judge for himself neither, and so must remain a *Papist*. In truth there is *no Medium* between the right of private Judgement, as I have stated it, and such a *blind* Submission to Authority, as will effectually prevent a *Reformation* from any false religion. A *Papist* in *France* would urge the very same consideration on a Protestant as Mr. *Mudge* has now urged upon us in these words, p. 29. The Protestant pleads, ‘ He
‘ has examin’d, and is furnish’d with many ex-
‘ amples of popular Errors, and national Ab-
‘ surdities; he can be eloquent upon the Blun-
‘ ders and Contradictions of General Councils,
‘ and Synods, and Convocations, &c.’ To this the *Papist* replies, ‘ The best, the wisest,
‘ the greatest bodies of Men have err’d, and
‘ are you then, young Man, *infallible*? They
‘ have done some things weakly, but do you
‘ all things wisely? They have contradicted
‘ themselves once or twice in a Century’ [*i. e.* as
often

often as they have met] ‘but do not you many
‘times every week, or every day of your
‘Life?’ Now, what would Mr. *Mudge* answer
to this in *France*? Must he not, as a Pro-
testant, necessarily say, As neither I am infal-
lible, nor the Church; neither must judge for
the other, but I must judge *for myself*, and must
not submit my faith to the *General* Understand-
ing of a Kingdom of *Papists*? Without this prin-
ciple, there could have been *no Reformation*: nor
can the *English* Reformation be justified, but up-
on the right of *Private* Judgement as it has been
now explain’d. Unhappy then is the Case of
every *imposing Protestant*. To justify his *own*
Separation from *Popery*, he is forced to *insist* on
the right of *private* Judgement. But on the
other hand, when he speaks to *Dissenters*, he re-
quires them to *renounce* the right of *private*
Judgement, and to submit to *human* Authority
in Matters of *Religion*. Thus inconsistent must
Protestant Popery necessarily be.

When Mr. *Mudge* says, p. 8. ‘If great re-
‘gard is to be had to my Understanding, a
‘great regard is due to the Understanding of
‘another:’ he says what is in itself very true.
If I was so foolish as to require another to sub-
mit *his* Understanding to *me*; I ought, in order
to keep equals upon a level, to submit *my* Un-
derstanding to *him*. But when all the regard
that I expect another should pay to my Under-
standing is, that he should patiently *hear my*
reasons, and then impartially *judge* for himself:
all the regard, that is due from me to the Un-
derstanding of another is, that I think myself
obliged patiently to *hear his* reasons, and then
impartially to *judge* for *myself*. This is truly
magni-

magnifying the understanding of Man alike, and giving the same advantage to others which we claim to ourselves.

Besides, *How* shall we know, what is the *General Judgement*? It is pretty plain, in all Cases, and in all Bodies of Men, that the *Minority* do *not* submit to the *General Judgement*, but that the *Majority* are determin'd by the Judgement of a *few*. Thus in Convocations, Councils, Companies, Corporations, *two or three* leading men carry the Majority after them as they please. Wherever this is the Case, and the Majority have *not impartially* examin'd the Affair, and judged for *themselves*, their Judgement is not at all to be regarded. Which way soever then Mr. *Mudge* will take, he will, in his Scheme, find *insuperable* Difficulties. If in the general Judgement we must reckon only the Judgements of those very *few* who have carefully and impartially *examin'd* the Matter, how can this be call'd, the *general Judgement*; and how shall we determine, who they are, who *have* been *impartial* in the Examination? They, I am sure, will not bid fairest for impartiality, who increase their *Wealth* and *Authority* by means of the Opinions which they recommend. But if we must not seek the *general Judgement* among the discerning and impartial *few*, but among *all* that are of that Judgement, whether they have examin'd or not, we shall be blindly led by *blind Guides*, and must, if they will lead us thither, follow them into *Popery* or *Heathenism*.

I shall only add on this head, that according to Mr. *Mudge's* own principle about *submitting* to the *General Judgement*, he ought to *renounce* his
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Doctrine of the *Necessity of human Actions*. The General Judgement of the *Learned and Unlearned*, the settled Judgement of the *Church* is, that we have a *natural Liberty of Action*, and are not under the *same necessity of acting*, according to the stronger motives, as we are of *judging according to evidence*. Let Mr. *Mudge* prove he has a *Liberty*, and a *right* to follow his *own private Judgement* in this case, in opposition to the general Judgement of Mankind; and I will by the same reasons defend my private Judgements too.

Mr. *Mudge* has call'd upon the Dissenters to *sacrifice gloriously a few small Scruples to the great truth of publick Order*, p. 33. that is to say, he invites us to do, what, at the same time, he expressly owns to be impossible in the nature of things, I mean, to *disbelieve a thing, which to our selves carries every appearance of credit, and to do this when the strongest Motives of action determine us to do the contrary*, p. 3. A *Scruple* is a *fear*, or an *apprehension*, that a thing is *unlawful*. While we have such an apprehension, we *dare not act*, because *whatsoever is not of faith is sin*, Rom. xiv. 23. And surely we must not sin against God to please men, nor sacrifice a *good Conscience* to what is call'd, *the great truth of publick Order*. He tells us, The Dissenters *seem generally now to think their Scruples small*. If they do, it is because they are *degenerated*, and do not *know*, or have *forsaken* the Principles of *Dissenters*.

I have mentioned already in these papers one strong reason against Conformity, *viz.* the Sin we should be guilty of in practising *human institutions* in the worship of God, p. 25.

I shall at present mention only one more, and that very briefly, which is far enough from being a *small* Scruple. It is this: The Church of *England* has required several things as *necessary terms* of *Communion* with her, which she expressly owns *not* to be appointments of *God*, but *mere commandments of Men*, such as the Cross and Sponsors in Baptism, Kneeling at the Lord's Supper, Surplices, &c. If these *acknowledged* commandments of Men were laid aside, the Church and Dissenters would be *one* in an instant. Consequently these commandments and ordinances of men are the *ONLY cause of the Division*. But God hath expressly commanded, *Mark them that cause Divisions and Offenses contrary to* (or rather, as it is in the Greek, *over and above*) *the doctrine they have learn'd, and AVOID them, Rom. xvi. 17. i. e. Depart, or separate yourselves from them.* So that as plain as it is, that the Church *causes* the Division by imposing *human* commands and institutions, so evidently is it our absolute *Duty* to separate from her. If we did not separate, we should disobey an express and plain *command* of Almighty *God*, which, I am sure, no Christian will desire us to do.

Upon this Occasion I beg leave to add, that *every single congregation* in the world has a right to *judge* for itself, in opposition to all other Congregations whatever: That every congregation is *obliged* to do all those things in the Worship of God, which, after a serious and honest examination, *they* sincerely believe *God* has required *them* to do in his Worship. If their doing such things keeps any *out of their Society*, they cannot help that,

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and are *not* to be *blamed*. We seriously *believe* we are commanded by God to celebrate the *Lord's Supper* in our Churches: we must therefore do it, notwithstanding that it makes the Quakers keep off from our Societies: Because we must do every thing that *we think* God has commanded us. But supposing we should make it *necessary* to our Communion, that the People should *fit*, and would receive none that would not comply with this imposition, and mere human Command, *we* should *cause the Division*, and ought to be *avoided*. And this would be such an aggravated wickedness, as I even *tremble* to describe. A Man of an *unspotted* and *exemplary* Life, comes to us, and declares his *faith* in the Gospel, and thereupon desires to be admitted to *our Communion*, pleading as such a one justly may, that God has *given him* a *Right* to the Lord's Supper, and consequently *commanded* us to receive him; and telling us withal that he scruples any other posture besides kneeling, while he intends no manner of Adoration or worship to the Elements: If we should *refuse* to receive such a man to our Communion, the Language of our rejecting him would really be this: 'We acknowledge, Sir, as you are
 ' a *believer*, a *good* man, and *no* Idolater, that
 ' God *has* given you a *right* to the Lord's
 ' Supper: but let God say what he will, we
 ' will not receive you.' I pray God we may never be guilty of such *Impiety*. It would be in vain to plead, that *another* Church would *receive* such a Man, if *we* did *not*: since perhaps his habitation is *so far* from any other Church, as that it is vastly inconvenient, if
 not

not *impossible* to go to it: besides that we should be *Hereticks*, i. e. *Sect-makers* (as all imposers are) if we did not receive *every good Christian* to our Communion, who offers to join with us, without imposing any human institutions upon him.

Before I leave Mr. *Mudge*, I would take notice of his teaching us concerning *human reason*, that there are ' fatal Consequences of ' indulging it to excess; *that as* reason is of ' great use, as it is employ'd in correcting the ' Excesses, and rectifying the wrong use of ' our sense, our faith, or our passions; *so in* ' return, it does itself as much, *full as much*, ' need the *salutary Check* which it receives from ' them, *p. 17.* and, that we may be *enslaved* ' to our own reason, when not knowing its ' bounds, it plays the *Tyrant* within us, *p. 19.* If by this Mr. *Mudge* only means, that we are creatures composed of Sense and Passions as well as Reason, and that therefore we should not attempt to *destroy* our senses and passions, but only not *abuse* them, he says no more than all the world will grant; and his long discourse on this head will bear hard upon none but the old *Stoic* Philosophers, who have long since disappear'd. But then his expressions will not seem to be just. For, in strictness of Language, our Reason can never be indulged to *excess*, tho' *Passions* may. What he calls *Reason in excess* really *ceases* to be Reason, and is really *Prejudice*, *Passion*, or any thing else rather than Reason: whereas a *Passion of Fear* (for instance) in *excess* does *not cease* to be the *Passion of Fear*, but is just what it was before, only advanced to a higher degree.

degree. Reason in men is always *right*: for that which is not right is not Reason. I cannot conceive how it can be said with any propriety of Language, that Reason *as much* needs a *salutary Check* from Passion, as Passion from Reason. The true State of the Case seems plainly to be this. If we had nothing in us but *reason*, we should *always* act *rightly*: reason then cannot possibly need a Check. But since we have *Passions* in us, which are apt to lead us *astray*, we need something to *check* them. Reason serves for this purpose in part: and good Affections rais'd in opposition to the ill ones carry on the work. These good Affections concur with reason to keep us in the Path of Virtue: and the Gospel best supplies and improves these good Affections.

I cannot conclude without expressing my *heartly thanks* to God, and under him to our *Governours* for the happy Liberty and *Toleration* which we enjoy. And as the Dissenters are *among the best* and most hearty Friends of the Government, we make no doubt of being defended and secured in all our present Immunities and Privileges. And it is our most hearty Prayer, that God will please to preserve and bless his present most Gracious Majesty, and all his illustrious Family, and ever defeat the vile Designs of all their Enemies. *Amen.*

Nov. 10. 1731.

